



Connecticut Coalition
for Justice in Education Funding

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Connecticut Supreme Court Reaches Historic Decision: Children Have Right to Quality Education

Hartford, CT – Today, the Connecticut Supreme Court ruled that all Connecticut schoolchildren have a constitutional right to an effective and meaningful education. In reaching one of its most important and fundamental decisions in thirty years, the Court stated that, “the fundamental right to an education is not an empty linguistic shell” and must meet “modern educational standards.” The Court said these standards must prepare students to “participate in democratic institutions,” “attain productive employment,” and “progress on to higher education.”

Four and a half years since the case was first filed in a Hartford Superior Court, the Supreme Court’s decision allows the case to move to trial to determine whether the State is providing all students with a constitutionally adequate education. With the urgency expressed in the Court’s decision, the plaintiffs expressed hope that legislators will seize the opportunity to work with their communities to improve our public school system, rather than continue to fight schoolchildren in court.

“This decision empowers the General Assembly to give our kids the education they need—we look forward to working with the legislature to provide a high-quality education to all of Connecticut’s schoolchildren,” said Dianne Kaplan deVries, CCJEF Project Director.

For CCJEF member and New Britain parent of two, Merrill Gay, the need for action is great: “Like every parent, I want the very best for my kids’ future. My children, and every New Britain child, deserve better from the State.”

The Connecticut Coalition for Justice in Education Funding (CCJEF), together with fifteen students and their families from across the state, challenged the constitutionality of the education that the State is currently providing to Connecticut schoolchildren in *CCJEF v. Rell*. Joined by a broad-based coalition of parents, municipalities, local boards of education, statewide education associations, advocacy organizations, and others, these plaintiffs argue that Connecticut’s failure to equitably and adequately fund its public schools has irreparably harmed thousands of schoolchildren.

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Legal documents and related background information are available at www.ccjef.org.